

SEEKING GOD TOGETHER INTRODUCTORY POWERPOINT

OVERVIEW OF EACH SLIDE WITH SPEAKER NOTES

1. Front Cover image

- i** *SGT is a resource for the Pastoral Accompaniment of Families -
The clue is in the Title and the picture...
We are SEEKING GOD TOGETHER with those families we accompany.
Family in all its rich variety – see images*

2. Contents of the Companion

- i** *Explain not a course but a companion or handbook for the pastoral accompaniment of families.
The INTRODUCTION is absolutely key to understanding SEEKING GOD TOGETHER..
Read it... reflect on it...before you start using the Resource.
We will be exploring the CONTENTS of SGT Companion in this intro Power Point*

3. Emmaus picture ‘ accompaniment’

- i** *HOLDING ALL OF THIS TOGETHER IS THE STORY OF EMMAUS **Table exercise: (5 minutes)**
IN THE GROUP: Just quickly remember and tell each other the story of Emmaus – in as much detail as you can remember.
No lengthy table-by-table feedback but briefly ask the whole group: How did you get on? Together did you manage to tell the story?
Emmaus pattern is the foundational pattern of accompaniment.... (CLICK and a small brown dialogue box appears) It is something we do “with and alongside” rather than something we do ‘to’ or ‘for’ others... It moves away from ‘IF only’... to ‘What if!...’ full of HOPE and the POSSIBILITY...
We are part of something much bigger than ourselves...We are on this journey together, and Christ is with us.*

4. Background to the development of SGT

i SGT builds on 3 decades of family and catechetical ministry in England & Wales ...inspired by so much of this long journey, it has come together in the last few years, years with the particular inspiration of Pope Francis, his catechesis on the family, the two Synods on the family, and the fruit of those Synods, *Amoris Laetitia*, *THE Joy of Love*.

2. (see slide) Pope Francis encourages our accompaniment – affirming that “There is no stereotype of the ideal family... (see slide) we are to **‘keep close to Christ, walking together with families in the reality of their lives’**.”

3. SGT aims to support this walking together with families as parish or the Catholic school (preferably together if you have a school). And to think about it... **and make connections**... and be ready to offer **‘a word of truth and affirmation and hope**, helping families discover the sacramental significance of their daily lives at home – God is present in their love. God is with them!

4. Why bother? Because families, and family life in all its rich dimensions are of **vital** significance to us all - single, married, lay and ordained. (see SGT P.8 ‘Welcome to Seeking God Together’) (Click and next bullet point appears) We all share in the vocation to grow in love, as the Holy Father says, it is a ‘yearning’ that is part of being human.. ... What the Church is on a large scale, the family is on a small scale – an image of God’s love in human relationships. Families – in their love of one another – say something about God.

5. The art of accompaniment – Pope Francis

i See the slide, invite people to read it. If you have time, ask them what catches their attention... (call out)

Pope Francis says in *The Joy of the Gospel* (EG), (on slide) “In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers **can make present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze**. The Church will have to initiate everyone into this ‘art of accompaniment’

This ‘Emmaus-like’ companionship... we learn this from Jesus himself on the road to Emmaus (as you recounted to one another earlier... join the journey, ask what’s going on in their lives, listen, interact and share the journey, give your perspective/personal faith view, keeping close to Christ, opening scripture or teaching, as take-off or landing points.....; respond to their invitation to join them... go deeper. **THEIR** reaction, their reception, finding themselves in the story, their voice.. Heart burning!

6. SGT A practical companion from Conception to Death - Aims

i SGT aims to support this 'Emmaus like' **accompaniment** of families from Conception to Death See slide, read out.

Comment:

p.11 of The SGT Introduction gives a very clear description of 'the art of accompaniment', journeying with and alongside..

And it asks the reader, the team, whoever is beginning this 'review' or 'planning' for family ministry in the parish or school, to think for themselves, and discuss – "What does it mean to accompany like Jesus? "

And P. 11 of SGT Introduction – continues

- **Which of these bullets about the way Jesus accompanies catch your attention**
- Opportunity for sharing: What would YOU say are the key characteristics of accompaniment?
- And the Method of accompaniment chosen is Christ like - a way of reflective, pastoral practice that **sees and builds on the goodness** in families at the outset rather than being despairing or critical of what is seen to be broken.
- This is known as 'Appreciative Inquiry' – described on pages 11-13 – in **building a 'culture' of accompaniment** - Culture being 'the way we do things round here'

7. A practical companion

i Seeking God Together – at a glance (see p.9 of Introduction for detail)

The companion... (each point comes up on a click)

- **Is Based on a 'journey in faith' model of accompaniment, across each of the nine seasons of family life**
 - Says – **keep close to Christ** ourselves... and meet families where they are, starting from a family perspective, their perspective, as Jesus did 'Where are you going?' 'What things are you talking about?' What do you want me to do for you?...
- **Builds on Strengths** – not getting downhearted about problems... finding goodness, celebrating that– which gives families **CONFIDENCE** that God is

with them in the ordinary giving and receiving of love, the please, sorry and thank you moments, the power of tenderness, are all full of grace.

- *Is about **CREATING SPACE for conversation** = accompanying, walking alongside, with...*
- ***In making use of this companion**, wherever and however you start, in every SEASON you will find questions to help you reflect as you accompany*
 - *At this point what is it we are already doing well*
 - *What is life like for families and those on the edge of our community*
 - *What is God doing in their lives*
 - *What more could we offer when time and energy is at a premium*
 - *Who is the community could be included here in serving and accompanying families at particular points in their journey?*
- *Although it refers to and **integrates key insights of the Church's teaching** on MFL, SGT is **not primarily a reference book***
 - *It helps a parish review its current practice. And to identify new opportunities – we call these 'take off' and 'landing' points for accompaniment (in our church language, in times of evangelisation, catechesis, formation, guidance, ritual, liturgy)*
 - *Appendix B offers a process – stop and think, as a team, a group... this is a planning aid for a parish (there a power point for this too)*

8. On-going support across NINE broad 'SEASONS' of family life

i *It follows through nine seasons – human life from conception ... (each Season comes up on a click)*

And each Season begins from the Experience of Family life - family expecting a baby, families with pre=school children, families in childhood years, in adolescent years, young adults and single people – of any age (all of us pass through periods of being single at various times in our life).

Couples preparing for marriage, enrichment of married and family life over the years, to empty nest, and retirement years, to later life.

9. Who is SGT for?

i **Bishops** and their diocesan personnel in planning pastoral development – providing for the pastoral care and nurture of families in the gradual and many sided process of growing in faith (e.g. OGF clergy, Liturgy, Evangelisation & Catechesis, Family Life)

Parish communities – clergy and lay – in their responsibility for accompanying families in faith, and in building and sustaining strong family ministry... in accompanying families – nurturing them in their relationships and life at home, as domestic church

Schools – senior leadership, RE co-ordinators, yes, and where there are chaplaincy teams in schools, but all staff, all assistants, all home link workers, focussed on all school families – parents and children and wider families... in developing, renewing, sustaining strong, supportive partnerships with families in nurturing children/students, and in their education and formation for Christian living

Chaplaincies – teams/ministries – meeting families of people in prison, or hospital, or in the Traveller community...

Families = for some families, at the different stages on their journey, who are seeking to know more about their faith, and deepen or refresh their relationship with God. May like to dip in, or have conversations with other people in the same boat. The parish community has that mission to reach out... perhaps enable these conversations.

Ecumenical ministries supporting families across denominational divides. Often in families themselves who would describe themselves as 'inter-church'... they are living a unity, a communion, that we are ALL working towards. We share our love and care for families and there is a great deal we can do together with our brothers and sisters in Christ, particularly in accompanying families in faith. (The Resources we signpost to in each Season will make reference to ecumenical resources, e.g. The Kitchen Table Project, or Going4Growth.)

10. Examples of when you might use the Companion

i **For Reviewing and planning pastoral accompaniment of families in diocesan deanery parish school chaplaincy settings**

diocesan, deanery, parish, school and chaplaincy settings

Or for specific groups/needs – to review and plan accompaniment

- *Parents/grandparents bringing children for Sacraments*
- *Couples in marriage preparation*
- *New parents/parents in toddler group or home-parish-school relationship*
- *Relationship enrichment opportunities*

- **Any parish ministry groups** (e.g. parish council, evangelisation team, children's liturgy, hospitality, liturgical ministries: (Special ministers of Holy Communion, Ministers of the Word, Music ministry); Outreach: Society of St Vincent de Paul, & social justice groups; bereavement or 'consolation' group, parent/toddler; family groups)
- **INSED training in schools**; senior management teams, RE advisers, teachers and assistants, ancillary staff)
- **Chaplaincy teams** (school, hospital, university, prison)
- **Seminaries and On-Going formation** of clergy opportunities
- **Seasonal reflection days**, e.g. Advent, Lent, looking at a particular area of family ministry, 'What's life like?' ... and accompaniment of the spirituality of family life in this season

11. The approach in each 'Season'

i *Based on those principles earlier – meeting families where they are, and accompanying them... looking for the goodness and strengths and building on that – not focussed on 'fixing what is broken'*

Moves through steps/stages

*We are using Four D's explain this step by step process or methodology:
Describe, Discover, Design, Deliver*

Now we will look at each of these in detail

12. First part of each Season: DESCRIBE

i **DESCRIBE**

1. *Begins with AL quote on divider page at the start of the Season,*
2. *Followed by A story and a picture and a question –What is YOUR experience or that of someone close to you in this season? (this may or may NOT resonate with your experience – a chance to begin a conversation.*
3. *Then moves on with some Text: **What's happening in the family? What's it like at this stage....***
4. *Followed by charts*

In the book itself, it looks like this: (see next slide for image)

13. At a glance – Pointers to Deepen Conversation

i In the book it looks like this... (they may hopefully have a book in front of them)

14. Second part of each Season: at a glance, pointers for FAMILY SENSITIVE ACCOMPANIMENT, i.e. DISCOVER

i Second part of each SEASON is 'At a Glance, Pointers for Family-Sensitive Accompaniment.

We could refer to this as the 'DISCOVER' phase.

Keeping close to Christ, our own relationship with Christ, we look out with that gaze... walking alongside the family or group of families

- *to "DISCOVER" what GOD is doing. The Holy Spirit is already active remember... be aware. Have a conversation with them: Who is God for them? Where is God for them? Listen. Reflect back. Meet them where they are. What are they looking for and why?*
- *To talk together: What might the church offer at this point – to support family togetherness, family spirituality, family outreach?*

At a glance charts – are there to offer some ideas, some 'Pointers' for family sensitive accompaniment across HOME, PARISH and SCHOOL

(see next slide. In the book it looks like this)

15. At a glance - pointers for family sensitive accompaniment – in the BOOK

i In the book it looks like this:

'Pointers for Family Sensitive Accompaniment" you find lots of ideas. Remember, these are just take-off and landing points for your own conversation and planning.

In the first 2 or 3 pages of this section you find:

- *On the left: Home – ideas that support family's relational life and service as the place where God dwells – holiness of everyday life*
- *On the right: Parish – ideas that support welcome, accompanying and serving the family at this point when their lives intersect with the parish community*

Secondly, in the next few pages – (the 'school' section appears on a 'click')

- *School – what are the opportunities here for developing, renewing, sustaining strong, supportive partnerships with families at this stage.. In the nurturing of*

*children and students and in their education and formation for Christian living...
Role of the school.... In every Season, conception to death*

16. The third part of each Season is OPPORTUNITIES for ACCOMPANIMENT

i *Design:*

- *Opportunity for the team or group to talk together... about what they can and Want to offer.. And begin to design a plan...*
- *To ask – what has caught our attention*
- *What small steps might we take...*
- *See next slide – this is what it looks like in the book*

17. In the book it looks like this: Opportunities for Accompaniment (it is the 'DESIGN' phase, but word 'DESIGN' does not appear!)

i *In the book, it looks like this.... Just a paragraph of text...*

This is not prescriptive, just describing the possible opportunities in order to help you DESIGN a response.

Each team or group will draw on their own experience, talk together about the various needs and opportunities and possible strategies...

This is Closely linked to the final step:

(CLICK – box appears)

Design one or two practical steps to accompany the family or groups of families at this point (and move to next slide: Deliver)

18. The final part of each Season is DELIVER: Practical first steps and action

i *Closely linked to Deliver the action....i.e. The Offer...*

- *Offer opportunities for Home, School, Parish. To respond practically to the family needs - something foundational to a healthy happy family life, friendly, supportive, welcoming, building communion, nurturing faith, enabling encounter with Christ and his Church. **Little steps.***
- *Sift through the ideas. You are discussing your own ideas, and looking for one or two small practical steps to accompany the family or group of families.*
- *Prepare to 'DELIVER'*

- *Decide who is going to accompany and how, sharing responsibilities in the community e.g. is there a family in the community at the same stage, an individual or an older couple? What about a catechist... or a welcomer ... or a listener... or a Home-school link person?*
- *What training might support the action?*
- *What resources do you have or need?*

19.in the book, the page looks like this: Deliver – practical first steps and action

i A word about Resources on NEXT slide, 20.

20.A word about RESOURCES – and click QR code

i See slide:

- *DRAW ON YOUR OWN WISDOM! The most valuable resource is wisdom in the room, in the community, in families.*
- *Trust in the Holy Spirit at work..*
- *Look at what we already do well! Build on strengths.*
- *Recommended resources: these have been identified by practitioners as valuable. You can offer your own ideas via our website – resources that you have used or developed and find to be “gold-standard”*

Each Season has a QR code on this ‘Deliver’ page, which takes you to Catholic Family Website, www.catholicfamily.org.uk

Here you will find Seeking God Together pages, and if you scroll down to the bottom, you will find PDFs with resources, one for each season

*(Just for those who are not familiar: QR code (abbreviated from **Quick Response Code**) is the trademark for a type of matrix barcode (or two-dimensional barcode) first designed in 1994 . A QR code consists of black squares arranged in a square grid on a white background, which can be read by an imaging device such as a camera, and and processed by the QR scanner (You need an QR scanner APP - install on your mobile device) The required data is then extracted from patterns that are present in both horizontal and vertical components of the image and a click takes you to the website)*

21 TO SUPPORT YOU – order forms, pdfs for groups in advent (and later 2019 Lent), and PPT slides for Introduction (this one) and ‘FORMATION FOR PARISH AND/OR SCHOOL TEAM’ for parish community, school community, ministry groups, clergy, other groups.